

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 234 386

CS 207 687

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TITLE Newspaper Subscribers' Response to Accident Photographs: The Acceptance Level Compared to Demographics, Death Anxiety, Fear of Death, and State Anxiety.
PUB DATE Aug 83
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (66th, Corvallis, OR, August 6-9, 1983). Document taken from author's Master's Thesis at Marquette University.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Accidents; *Attitudes; *Media Research; *Newspapers; *News Reporting; *Photographs; Pictorial Stimuli
IDENTIFIERS *Photojournalism; *Reader Response

ABSTRACT

One hundred and one subjects responded to a questionnaire examining newspaper readers' response to news photographs depicting accidents. Each questionnaire contained four different accident scene photographs, with cutline information stating that the individual in the photograph either had died or was not seriously hurt. Each photograph was accompanied by 20 questions measuring respondents' acceptance of the picture and anxiety level, and by requests for demographic information. The results showed that with three of the four photographs the respondents appeared more accepting of the "victim-lived" than of the "victim-died" photographs. The photograph judged most acceptable depicted a fireman who, in both cutlines, had rescued several people from floodwaters, giving the photograph an air of heroism. Women were less accepting of the photographs than were the men, regardless of the cutline. Socioeconomic status did not affect acceptance levels significantly. Respondents experiencing low levels of state anxiety were considerably more accepting of the publication of such photographs than those with high levels and, overall, the less educated were more accepting of the photographs than were the more educated. In most cases, respondents with high death anxiety were more accepting of the photographs. Those who had made telephone calls to a newspaper to complain about editorial content were less accepting of the publication of accident photographs. (Photographs and cutlines from the questionnaire are appended.) (HTH)

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Newspaper Subscribers' Response to Accident Photographs

The Acceptance Level Compared to Demographics, Death Anxiety, Fear of Death, and State Anxiety

BY

James M. Roche

Work on this study is part of the author's Master's thesis at Marquette University. Mr. Roche is currently a doctoral student at Indiana University.

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The depiction of death in news photographs is almost as old as the medium of news photography itself. Roger Fenton, one of the first photographers to cover a war under fire, used the camera to document the Crimean War in 1855. Fenton's images included installations, battlefields, officers, and men.

Civil War photographer Matthew Brady continued Fenton's battlefield practice. It has been written that, "Brady and his men trained themselves to see and take grim still lifes which reflected the action frozen in death. The battlefield, littered like an upturned wastebasket, showering papers and pictures amidst the ungraceful, sprawling dead, made for poignant pictures of readily available fierce action."²

Although the practice of photographing combat has persisted, the depiction of death in photojournalism has not been restricted to the battlefield. One of the most vivid images of death ever displayed in newspapers was captured by Boston Herald-American photographer Stanley Forman. Forman recorded the image of a young woman and a little girl falling from a collapsed fire escape. The woman died from the fall.

For his efforts Forman was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. The Herald-American received nearly 250 tear-sheets from newspapers throughout the world that had published Forman's photograph(s). Herald-American executive editor Sam Bornstein said that in his 39 years in the newspaper business he had never seen such play on a news photograph.³

Reaction to Forman's work was mixed. While the Herald-American received some general protests, they also received much praise, and calls asking the condition of the little girl. However, other newspapers reported telephone calls from persons making charges of "sensationalism, poor taste, invasion of privacy, insensitivity, and tasteless display of human tragedy to sell newspapers."⁴

Outbursts of the type elicited by the Forman photograph(s) are often expected when death is displayed in a news photograph. (However, it is not certain that those voicing the disapproval are representative of all readers.) This study examines readers' responses to news photographs in which death is depicted. Examined are differences in the readers' acceptance levels broken down by variables of sex, education, and socio-economic status. Also examined is the degree of acceptance based on the psychological structure of the respondents' fear of death, death anxiety, and state anxiety.

To formulate hypotheses for this study, two areas of research were examined. Topics reviewed were newspaper readership studies (especially as they apply to news photography) and studies of attitudes toward death.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Photojournalism/In a test using college sophomores, Fedler, Counts, and Hightower developed three hypotheses regarding the offensiveness of potentially "controversial" news photographs. The authors sought to determine if:

- 1) Changes in the wording of a cutline have a significant impact upon readers' responses to the content of a controversial or potentially offensive photograph.
- 2) Women are more likely than men to be offended by controversial photographs.
- 3) Persons who rarely use the media are more likely to be offended by controversial photographs than persons who use the media more regularly.⁵

Of the 22 photographs used in the study, four of them dealt with some type of human tragedy. Two of those showed persons who had been injured. Respondents in the first group were told that the subject(s) in the photographs had been uninjured, while the second group was led to believe that the subjects had at least been seriously injured. The second group found the photographs to be more offensive.

Because neither group ranked the remaining photographs as being more or less offensive, the authors felt the first hypothesis had not been supported. They believed that some of the differences could be expected to occur by chance alone.

Fedler et al determined that the second hypothesis was supported. They found that women considered the photographs significantly "less tasteful, less likeable, less newsworthy," and more offensive than did men. Media usage did not seem to affect responses to any of the photographs, thus the third hypothesis was not supported.⁶

The trio concluded that photographs of human grief were not as offensive as commonly imagined and that respondents generally liked the photographs which showed people helping other people, even when some of the victims had been injured. They also found it mattered little if the bodies of the accident victims were covered or not, or whether accident victims lived nearby or far away. The study showed that a majority of the respondents felt that editors should publish many of the photographs which they (the respondents) considered distasteful, unlikeable, and offensive.⁷

Whether or not editors and readers agree on the selection of photographs for use in newspapers was the question put to 500 readers and 275 editors in a survey conducted by the Associated Press Managing Editors photo committee. For the most part, the two groups agreed on what were interesting and newsworthy photographs. However, the exception was with gruesome and dramatic photographs. Editors seemed more tolerant of violence, but readership was divided.⁸

The survey showed that readers preferred feature pictures while editors preferred more fresh, hard news photographs. The editors were more unified in their views, while the readers were quite divided. The closest meeting between readers and editors was their view of feature pictures.⁹

MacLean and Kao studied 32 persons (half of them women) of different educational and occupational levels, and all age groups. Each of the subjects was presented with a package of photographs and asked to rank them in order of most liked to least liked. While the subjects were of different educational, occupational, and age levels, the study showed that their patterns of like/dislike for the photographs were similar.¹⁰

What the respondents liked were photographs of "celebrities, children, happy old ladies, roses and animals." What they disliked were "Mussolini and his mistress hanging by their feet, dead American soldiers, and dead bodies in general." In particular, the respondents did not like death, especially death caused by man. The authors are quick to caution that because the respondents did not like what was in the photographs doesn't mean they weren't interested in them. The photographs on the extreme ends of the scale also tended to be the ones which respondents said aroused the most emotion.¹¹

MacLean and Hazard found women to be far less interested in "blood and violence" photographs than were their male counterparts. However, because there was no outline information to accompany the photographs, there appeared to be some confusion as to what was going on in some of the photographs. Of a photograph of drowning victims being pulled from a lake, one woman said that it was "actual life drama-the fact that the little children are being saved from drowning." Another commented, "I'm a mother. I hope they lived. I'm afraid of water." It is quite conceivable that the women would have rated the photograph differently had they known what it actually represented.¹²

While most of the aforementioned studies have dealt with how people respond when they view a photograph, Swanson studied what people look at when they read a newspaper. Surveyed were 50,000 adult readers representing readership of 130 daily newspapers. The two factors which emerged most dominant in relationship to readership were visual forms (cartoons, photographs, and photograph cutlines) and subject matter. Swanson found that visual forms totaled only 18.4 percent of all items in a newspaper, but they received 51 percent of the readership. In essence, visual form used a fifth of the items to account for half of the readership.¹³

The photographs which were found to receive the most attention were fire/disaster, war, weather, consumer information, human interest, major crime, country correspondence, accident/mishaps, science/invention, and defense. The difference in preference between male and female was slight, but women favored human interest, social relations, features and home-family type photographs. Men favored labor, political international relations and sports. Swanson believed that this evidence might suggest that women were more "picture-minded" than men.¹⁴

Death/De Vries states that there is an "unmistakable social element" present in death. He says that dying in the modern world is characterized by prolongation, bureaucratization, and secularization. Six conditions of pre-modern dying are no longer present in modern society. These include (1) a low level of medical technology; (2) late detection of fatality-producing conditions; (3) a simple definition of death; (4) a high incidence of death by acute disease; (5) a high incidence of fatality-producing injuries; and (6) a fatalistic passivity toward dying persons.¹⁵

It was the combination of these conditions that made dying in pre-modern times a common and fairly visible experience, but one which was short in duration, said De Vries.

In contrast, the increased capacity for medical intervention present in the modern world has worked to lengthen the dying process and to reduce the visibility of death. De Vries states that these changes have significantly affected the social elements of death.

In regard to the modern family, De Vries found that with the shrinkage of the extended family, death has come to have a greater social-psychological significance and that identities structured within the family context are sharply influenced with the loss of a family member. The moments directly following the death are generally regarded as a time for isolation of the immediate family, even from intimate friends.¹⁶

In terms of medicine in the relation to the transitional experience, De Vries notes that the presence of medical technology in the form of experiment and training serves to redefine the limits and the nature of death. A terminal condition which once ended in death is redefined as a struggle for control over the disease process where every available resource is mobilized to prolong life.¹⁷

Concerning the bureaucracy of modern death control, Blauner states that since there is no death without a body, the corpse is another consequence of mortality that contributes to its descriptiveness, tending to produce fear, generalized anxiety, and disgust. The current separation of the handling of illness and the death from the family minimizes the average person's exposure to death and its disruption of the social process. Hospitals, he states, are organized to hide the facts of death and dying from patients as well as visitors. Hospitals go to great lengths to cover the corpse and remove it with the least possible interruptions.¹⁸

Larsen, Klar, Rex, and White studied attitudes toward death and found that death is one variable which is a major motivation that competes with constructive life forces. They found that what was feared was also likely to be repressed. While the fear of death is probably universal, they found that Americans in particular have created a death cult, which is characterized by serious attempts at self-deception. The deception includes open-casket funerals where the dead person is made to appear alive and sleeping in a state of perfect rest. Larsen et al note that it is doubtful that this deception actually works, and may in fact only intensify a person's fear of his own death.¹⁹

Larsen et al suspect that the fear of death is chiefly induced by unknown factors involved in dying. They presume that the more intimate experience a person has had with death (providing the experience is not traumatic), the more he will be desensitized and accepting of death. (They define desensitization here as the reduction of fear as the result of gradual exposure to the feared object.) Larsen et al also found a strong correlation between the fear of death and education. They discovered that the greater the education, the more negative the attitude toward death. The speculation is that individuals at higher levels of education have invested a great deal in their future personal experience. Therefore, the individual's death at this stage in his life would be experienced as frustrating important self-relevant goals and therefore conducive to negative attitudes.²⁰

In their study of attitudes toward death, Krieger, Eptig, and Leitner utilized Kelby's Psychology of Personal Constraints Theory. The theory holds that "a person's interactions with the world are characterized by his desire to actively anticipate events in that world through the use of his own constructed interpretations." If a person's identity and understanding of the world is challenged, he is said to experience threat. In construct theory terms, threat is said to be the awareness of an inability to accurately predict events in the world along with the awareness of a need to undertake some degree of systematic change in order to do so. Threat arises with the person's realization that he has lost anticipatory security with the environment.²¹

Death is threatening to most people because it is perceived as being both as likely to happen and as likely to bring about drastic changes in one's core structure. (The core structure is the construct that governs a person's maintenance process to enable him to maintain his identity and sense of continuing existence.) Krieger et al hypothesized that high-threat individuals would report more fear of death than would low-threat individuals and that the person who believes in an afterlife would be less threatened by death than one who does not.²²

It was also found that subjects scoring low in threat were more able to conceive of their own death, and that one who accepts death may think about it as often as one who is very threatened by it. Krieger et al discovered one finding contradictory to previous studies in that females were found to be significantly less threatened by death than their male counterparts.²³

In their examination of death anxiety and death acceptance, Ray and Najum found that death acceptance and death anxiety were not necessarily opposite and the two could in effect be positively correlated. Ray and Najum found that religious non-believers were more accepting of death than religious believers. However, the two death anxiety scales they used showed no significant relationship with religion. The results also showed male adults to be slightly less anxious than females, but the sexes did not differ in scores on death acceptance. The two reached the conclusion that people who accept death may still feel some anxiety about it, as they appear to be simply people who can take a realistic view of death and see positive aspects of it.²⁴

Feifel reports that women tend to think about death more frequently than men do,²⁵ and Charmichael believes that the fear of life or the death urge is many times stronger in women than in men.²⁶ Rheingold states that death as a preoccupation undoubtedly occurs more often in women than in men, and the fear of death and certain other attitudes tend to be more overt. Women are also more afraid of aging and loss of physical attractiveness, which carry the connotations of mutilation and dying.²⁷

According to Templer, females consistently have higher death anxiety scores than males, but there is no relationship between age and death anxiety scores. Templer notes that "personality adjustment and presence or absence of a feeling of well-being are more important variables" in the determination of death anxiety, as opposed to probability of or proximity to death. He reasons that "high death anxiety states can often be viewed in terms of a breakdown in the defense mechanisms that protect us from a total confrontation with the inevitable part of our existence that probably nobody can completely accept."¹⁵

Lester compared the attitudes toward death of the college student of the 1970's to that of the college student of 1935. He found that the general trend for the 1970 male student was to think of death more and to be less depressed by death and its appurtenances. Female students of the Seventies were found to be more preoccupied with thoughts of death than females of the Thirties. They were also more likely to be depressed by death. The tendency for females to respond with more negative attitudes than males was also a lot stronger in the Seventies, as the student of that time appeared to be more preoccupied with thoughts of death. This was a period of great social unrest and, of course, the Vietnam War.¹⁶

Lester also found that in both studies cancer was the disease most mentioned as the possible cause of the student's death. Death in an automobile accident was the most mentioned probable cause of death from an accident.¹⁶

Fulton wrote of the attitudes toward death in the United States stating that we have come to a point in our history where we react to death as we would to a communicable disease. Death is no longer viewed as the price of moral trespass or as the consequence of personal neglect or untoward accident. Instead, he states, "death is now a temporal matter. Like cancer or syphilis, it is a private matter that we discuss only reluctantly with our physician. Moreover, those who are caught in the throes of death are isolated from their fellow human beings and those who have died are hidden quickly from view." According to Fulton, death is a taboo subject, and as such it is both the object of much disguise and denial, as well as of raucous and macabre humor.¹⁷

Kubler-Ross adheres to the Freudian belief that in our conscious, death is never possible in regard to ourselves. She says it is inconceivable for our conscious self to imagine an actual end to our life here on earth. If our life has to end, the ending is always attributed to malicious intervention from the outside by someone else. She explains that in our conscious minds we can only be killed. Therefore, death is associated with a bad act, a frightening experience-something that in itself calls for retribution and punishment.¹⁸

Kubler-Ross also draws a strong correlation between fear and denial of death and intelligence. The less intelligent seem to possess a stronger belief in the afterlife and seem to fear death less. The more advanced and intelligent view death as the final act of living and seem to fear it more.¹⁹

METHODOLOGY

Measurement of the respondents' attitudes toward news photographs was made using a mailed questionnaire. Subjects for the study were randomly selected from two newspaper subscription lists. The newspapers used in the study were the La Crosse (Wis.) Tribune and the Lexington (Ky.) Herald-Leader. In all, 250 names were drawn from each newspaper. Businesses and double names were eliminated from the list, leaving 456 subscribers to receive the questionnaire.

Each subject received an envelope containing a seven-page questionnaire. Questionnaires consisted of a letter of introduction and instruction and three areas for responses. Those areas included a page of questions concerning the respondents' demographic information; a page of statements concerning the respondents' attitude toward newspapers, news photographers, and death; and four pages, each with a different photograph, seeking to measure the respondents' attitude toward the photograph.

Respondents were told the questionnaire was to be completed by only one person, preferably the member of the household who read the newspaper most often. Respondents were asked to study each photograph carefully, read the information that accompanied the photograph, and respond to the statements.

The instructions noted that the photographs used in the questionnaire were actual news photographs and the cutline information should be considered factual and accurate.

Following the instructions were four pages, each containing the same 20 statements and one of four different photographs. The four photographs each represented a different type of accident scene. Each photograph was accompanied by a number (either 1, 2, 3, or 4) and a letter (A or B). The difference between the "A" photographs and the "B" photographs was in the cutline information. The "A" cutline information stated that the individual in the photograph had died as a result of his/her injuries. The "B" cutline information stated that the person in the photograph was not seriously hurt. Each respondent received photographs numbered 1 through 4. In each questionnaire, two of the photographs were "A" photographs and the other two were "B" photographs.

Questionnaires were assembled in groups of 25 so that no two groups received the photographs in the same sequence. While one group of respondents may have received an A1, B2, A3, B4, configuration, the other received an A3, B4, A1, B2, set. This was to guard against instrument decay. By chance, each questionnaire consisted of two horizontal photographs and two vertical photographs.

The four photographs used in the experiment were selected by pretesting. A larger number of photographs was used during pretests, but results showed that the four selected were best in terms of clarity and believability. All of the photographs were actual news photographs which had been published in newspapers approximately the same circulation size as those supplying the subscription lists. (See Appendix A for photographs and cutlines.)

Each of the 20 response statements used a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. The middle responses were not labeled. The 20 statements were in the same order on each page. Included were statements used to measure the respondents' acceptance of the photograph and a state anxiety scale.

The general response page consisted of 34 statements. Half of the statements were used to measure the respondents' attitudes toward newspapers, and news photographers. The other half consisted of the death anxiety¹⁴ and fear of death scales.¹⁵

The last page of the questionnaire was the demographics page. Included were questions about the individual respondent's sex, age, occupation, religion, income, socio-economic status, and education. Also included were two questions asking respondents if they had ever either written a letter of complaint or telephoned a complaint to a newspaper concerning the newspaper's editorial content.

Based on previous research, eight hypotheses were developed for this study. The term "accident photographs" is used to describe the type of photographs used in the study. The eight hypotheses are:

- 1) Readers are less accepting of accident photographs in which someone has died than they are of photographs of someone who has only been injured.
- 2) Women are less accepting than men of accident photographs.
- 3) The more educated readers are less accepting of accident photographs than the less educated.
- 4) Readers of a high socio-economic status are less accepting of accident photographs than readers of a lower SES.
- 5) Readers who experience high state anxiety are less accepting of accident photographs than those whose state anxiety level is low.

6) Readers who experience high death anxiety are less accepting of accident photographs than those whose death anxiety level is low.

7) Readers who have a high fear of death are less accepting of accident photographs than those whose fear of death is low.

8) Readers who have complained to a newspaper about its editorial content will be less accepting of accident photographs than those who have not complained.

RESULTS and ANALYSIS

One hundred and one responses were calculated. Forty-five of the respondents were male, 56 were female. Forty-nine were from La Crosse, the remaining 52 were from Lexington. Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 82 years.

A factor analysis and Pearson correlation were used to establish the "acceptance" variable. The variable was a combination of six questionnaire statements. The Pearson correlation was also used to check the correlation of statements that made up the five-point fear of death scale, the five-point state anxiety scale, and the twelve-point death anxiety scale.

The socio-economic status was established by combining the three variables "income," "occupation," and "class standing." The median was used to establish the high/low groups. The median was also used to establish the high/low points for education, SES, fear of death, death anxiety, and state anxiety.

Analysis of variance was used to establish differences which are presented in the following review of the eight hypotheses. In each case, the term "accident photographs" refers only to those photographs used in this study.

*Accept/*With three of the four photographs, respondents displayed a strong tendency to be more accepting of the victim-lived photographs. The differences were not significant at the $p < .05$ level ($s = .071, .090, .095$). Photograph 2 was the exception to this, with very little difference exhibited between the acceptance level of the victim-died and victim-lived photographs ($s = .461$). What may account for such small difference in this photograph is an added element of concern. Photograph 2 contains not only an image of a small girl being tended to after she had been hit by a car, but the photograph also shows the girl's mother in the background. The mother is visibly shaken and is being comforted by friends. Therefore, the additional image of someone grieving may account for the overall low level of acceptance.

Of the four photographs, photograph 2 was judged the least acceptable and photograph 4 the most acceptable.¹⁴ Photograph 4 had an element of "heroism" in it. In both cases (dead and alive) the outline information read that the fireman had just rescued several persons from the flood waters. This may have left the impression with the reader that the fireman's death was not a senseless loss, and that he had died a hero. In this case, the photograph may in fact be regarded as a tribute to the man's courage.

Although the first hypothesis was not supported, there was a strong tendency for respondents to be less accepting of photographs in which the subject had died.

*Sex/*In all four of the cases women were significantly ($p < .05$) less accepting of the publication of the photographs than men. Women were generally less accepting of the victim-died photographs than the men, but the differences were not significant. The greatest difference was with photograph 2.¹⁵ Because women were less accepting of the photographs, the second hypothesis was supported.

*Education/*Only photograph 3 showed a significant difference ($p < .05$) between respondents' acceptance of the photograph and respondents' educational level. Overall, the less educated were more accepting of the photographs. In photograph 2 the difference approached significance ($s = .066$). However, in photographs 1 and 4 the less educated were much more accepting of the victim-died photographs than they were of the victim-lived photographs. The differences only approached significance ($s = .079, .077$, respectively), therefore, hypothesis three was not supported.

*SES/*Differences in the respondents' acceptance level and socio-economic status were significant ($p < .05$) only for photograph 2. Differences for photograph 3 approached significance ($s = .065$). Generally, respondents in the lower SES were more accepting of the victim-died photographs. However, differences were not statistically significant and did not support the fourth hypothesis.

*State Anxiety/*In all four cases there were significant differences between the respondents' acceptance level and their state anxiety level. (Photographs 1, 2, 4, $p < .001$, photograph 3 $s = .003$). Respondents experiencing low levels of state anxiety were considerably more accepting of the publication of the photographs. Therefore, hypothesis five was supported.

Death Anxiety/In most cases, respondents with high death anxiety were more accepting of the publication of the photographs. However, with photograph 2, respondents experiencing low death anxiety were less accepting of the victim-died photographs than they were of the victim-lived photographs. At the same time, the acceptance level of the high death anxiety respondents *decreased* from the victim-died photographs to the victim-lived photographs. Photograph 3 showed a significant difference ($p < .05$) between the acceptance level for high anxiety respondents when interacted with the dead/alive factor. The acceptance level of low anxiety respondents was greater for the victim-died photographs than for the alive photographs, while the acceptance level for the high anxiety respondents was greater for the victim-lived photographs than for the dead.

Not only was the sixth hypothesis not supported, but just the opposite appears to be true. Respondents experiencing high death anxiety were more accepting of accident photographs than their low anxiety counterparts.

Fear of Death/There were no significant differences between the respondents' acceptance level and their fear of death. However, as with death anxiety, there was a tendency for those with a high fear of death to be more accepting of the photographs' publication than those possessing a low fear of death. This trend was consistent throughout. As was the case with death anxiety, the hypothesis for fear of death tended to be the opposite of what was predicted.

Complainers/Also compared were the acceptance levels of respondents who had complained to a newspaper about editorial content. Two questions were put to the respondents, asking them if they had ever either written a letter of complaint or made a telephone call to complain. In both cases, 20 percent of the respondents had done so.

There was no significant difference between the letter-writers and the non letter-writers and their acceptance of the photographs. However, the same was not true for those who used the telephone. With three of the four photographs there was a significant difference between the acceptance level of those who had called to complain and those who had not. Respondents who had telephoned the newspaper to complain about its editorial content were far less accepting of the publication of the photographs. Therefore, hypothesis eight was supported.

SUMMARY

Several general trends developed in this study. Readers were less willing to accept the publication of the victim-died photographs, but not all of the results for that were statistically significant. Women, the better educated, and those of a higher SES, were more reluctant to accept the publication of the photographs than were their counterparts.

One of the more interesting aspects of the results is that those who experienced a high level of state anxiety were significantly less receptive to the publishing of any of the four photographs, regardless of the condition of the victim. Considering Larsen et al and their finding that what is feared is also often repressed, one can speculate that viewing a photograph which increases one's state anxiety level may break through the individual's psychological barrier of self-denial. Therefore, the photograph may only serve to remind the individual of his/her vulnerability which increases the anxiety level. If Larsen et al are correct then this process may in fact increase the individual's attempt at self-deception, which may only intensify his/her fears.

The acceptance level of respondents for the death anxiety and fear of death scales was actually found to be inversely proportional when compared to other variables. In each, the high anxiety/high fear respondents were more accepting of the publication of the photographs. An explanation for this may lie in the findings of Ray and Najum in that persons accepting death may still feel some anxiety about it but may simply be people who can take a realistic view of death and see the positive aspects of it.

Another interesting aspect of this study was in the photograph selection. Although great caution was taken to select photographs similar to each other in content and message, several other messages seemed to exist. There were several elements which may have set photograph 2 apart from the others. The victim was a child, which may have elicited more sympathy from the respondents. The little girl's mother was seen crying in the background. The reaction to showing someone in grief is often that it is an invasion of privacy, and therefore, unacceptable.

Photographs 2 and 3 were different from photographs 1 and 4 in that the type of accidents portrayed in the second and third photographs could happen to most anyone. However, the accidents portrayed in photographs 1 and 4 were job-related. Therefore, the possibility of that type of accident happening to just anyone was less likely.

As mentioned earlier, photograph 4 may have presented its victim as a hero in the eyes of the respondents. This was also an incident in which the victim entered into voluntarily. Ironically, photograph 4 had the lowest difference between respondents' acceptance levels and their state anxiety levels. This suggests that since the chances of this type of accident happening to most persons is low, the state anxiety produced by viewing the photograph is low and has less of an adverse effect on the respondent's acceptance level.

Finally, it is interesting to note that those who have made telephone calls to a newspaper to complain about editorial content also were found to be less accepting of the publication of the photograph. This suggests that these respondents may be of the type that are generally outspoken, but unwilling to accept anything they don't consider to be within their set of norms.

APPENDIX A

Photographs and cutlines.



Firemen and paramedics work to save the life of eight-year-old Tammy Hines as the girl's family and neighbors look on. The girl was struck by a car after darting into the street and died several hours later of massive head injuries. 42

Firemen and paramedics work to save the life of eight-year-old Tammy Hines as the girl's family and neighbors look on. The girl was struck by a car after darting into the street. She is listed in critical condition and is reported to be recovering. 42



Concrete plant worker Jack Kern struggles to free fellow-worker Al Morph (lower right) after Morph was buried in a bin holding 40 tons of sand. Worker's efforts to free Morph, who was buried for nearly two hours, were successful. 41

Concrete plant worker Jack Kern struggles to free fellow-worker Al Morph (lower right) after Morph was buried in a bin holding 40 tons of sand. Worker's efforts to free Morph, who was buried for nearly two hours, were in vain as he died before he could be removed. 41

APPENDIX A



After rescuing several persons from the flood-swollen Fox River, volunteer fireman Ed Palmer struggles to free himself from the raging waters. Moments after this photograph was taken, fellow firemen pulled Palmer to shore. **84**

After rescuing several persons from the flood-swollen Fox River, volunteer fireman Ed Palmer struggles to free himself from the raging waters. Seconds after this photograph was taken, Palmer was pulled under by the strong current and drowned. **84**



Edward Anderson leans over Tarah Koberline, who was killed in a traffic accident Saturday on Interstate 94. Anderson was driving a car which slid into the median and overturned. Miss Koberline was thrown from the car and was pronounced dead at the scene. Neither Anderson nor a second passenger were seriously injured. **83**

Edward Anderson leans over an unconscious Tarah Koberline who was injured in a traffic accident Saturday on Interstate 94. Anderson was driving a car which slid into the median and overturned. Miss Koberline, a passenger, was thrown from the car. She is listed in satisfactory condition. Neither Anderson nor a second passenger were seriously hurt. **83**

APPENDIX B

Mean responses for acceptance levels.

Minumum....5.00

Maximum...30.00

	PHOTO 1 -----	PHOTO 2 -----	PHOTO 3 -----	PHOTO 4 -----
Entire Population	16.86	15.67	16.09	18.65
Victim/lived	18.00	15.98	17.58	19.86
Victim/died	15.83	15.25	15.00	17.31
Sig. of F	.071	.461	.090	.095

BY SEX

Victim/lived				
Male	20.45	17.04	18.95	20.72
Female	16.25	15.33	16.00	19.10
Victim/died				
Male	16.36	17.65	16.63	19.55
Female	15.35	12.50	14.00	15.71

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30) Ibid.

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34) See: Donald I. Templer, "The construction and validation of a Death Anxiety Scale," *Journal of General Psychology*, 82, 1970, pp. 165-177.

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36) The means for the overall acceptance level for photographs 1-4 were: 16.86, 15.67, 16.09, and 18.65, respectively. The minimum for each was 5.00 and the maximum was 30.00. (For complete table see Appendix B.)

37) The acceptance-level mean for males viewing the victim-died version of photograph 2 was 17.65. For the females it was 12.50. For males viewing the victim-lived version of the same photograph the mean was 17.04, as opposed to 15.33 for the females. The mean for the entire population was 15.67. (For complete table see Appendix B.)